

back my hair and kissed my forehead in her loving manner, said, 'Oh, Robert! how happy I shall be to see you come home with the medal on!' I thought then that I would try to obtain it. So I sat down cheerfully to my task.

9. "I recollect the scene as though it were but yesterday. My mother read the six lines to me a number of times over, and then she explained the meaning of the words. She told me of Demosthenes, and the efforts he made to overcome his natural defects. I remember asking her if I should get some pebbles to hold in my mouth; whether it would do me any good; and how happy her laugh rang out at my witticism. Then she told me of Cicero, and of the great services he rendered his country, by his oratory and learning, thus endeavoring to awaken my mind to some effort of imitation.

10. "I like to listen to stories, and it was in this manner that I had been taught what little I knew; for I could not comprehend words. I wanted images, and these my mother, by her manner, and the comparisons she would draw from familiar things, could succeed in picturing to my imagination. In books, I found nothing but words, and those I could not remember. But I am growing tedious, I fear, as that evening was to my mother and myself.

11. "For two long hours she patiently taught me. I read over the lines a hundred times; I recited them after her; sometimes I would repeat two or three consecutive words, and I could see her face brighten with hope; but when she took the book for the last recitation, and after I had been studying most intently for some minutes, I could not repeat a single word. I can recollect now my sensation at that time; it seemed to me that I knew all that my mother wished me to say; but a kind of wavering shadow would come between me and my lesson, and make all the words indistinct, and my will had no power to control these fancies.